NOTES

1. Papers selected for inclusion in General Sessions will be available at the Conference in the following official languages of the United Nations: English, French, Russian and Spanish.

2. Papers selected for inclusion in Specialized Sessions will be available at the Conference in only one of the above official languages.

3. Summaries of all papers, as submitted by contributors, will be available at the Conference in the following official languages of the United Nations: English, French, Russian and Spanish.

4. Papers and summaries will not be available for general distribution in advance of the Conference. They will be published in advance in limited quantities only for the use of delegations of participating governments and of other authorized participants. Post-Conference publication and general distribution of the Conference Proceedings will follow United Nations practices as laid down by the United Nations Publications Board.

Mobilization of Manpower Potential in Asia and Africa[1]

by

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1. The point of departure of this study is the fact that there are some hundreds of millions of more or less idle workers in the developing countries. This fact is insufficiently taken cognizance of by the politicians of the developing countries and in the development policies of the industrial countries. Up to now development policies have been restricted to forms of production and organization which essentially correspond to the standard of the industrial countries. It is characteristic of these policies that they should mainly rely on those production factors "capital" and "technical economic know-how" which are especially rare in the developing countries; this gives them a typical Euro-American character. Thus throughout the developing countries development centres based on the pattern of Western technological civilization have arisen, whose underlying forms of production and ways of living do not differ from those of the traditional industrial countries.

2. The result is that the limits of this development policy must be rather narrowly set. Development projects implemented in these countries are therefore necessarily restricted to relatively small areas, mostly to a few larger towns and cities and the surrounding areas. The vast expanses of the country with the majority of the population and the greater economic potential are not covered by development projects. Thus the gap continuously widens between the small industrial centres and the rural areas of the developing countries.

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1. Billerbeck, Klaus, Extract from a study on "Mobilization of Manpower Potential in Asia and Africa," Hamburgisches Weltwirtschafts-Archiv (Hamburg Archives of World Economy), 169 pages, Hamburg (1961)

3. Therefore we must seek to elaborate a new community development policy supplementing our present policy. In so doing we cannot raise the same high claims on those scarce production factors "capital" and "technical economic know-how." The development of rural areas, a task not yet covered by any development policy, can only be undertaken by making use of existing dormant production resources in these areas, i.e. chiefly by mobilizing the idle manpower potential.

4. The utilization of dormant production resources must be based in the first instance on self-help, i.e. self-help in so far as the necessary steps must be taken almost exclusively by the developing countries themselves without any substantial support by the industrial countries, and self-help in so far as the main efforts must be made by the rural population itself, on the whole gratuitously, responsibly, and jointly. Secondly, the effort must be made to gradually improve the primitive techniques and appliances in use in the villages. It is not the aim of the supplementary development policy here under discussion to achieve the mechanization of agriculture or to equip village craftsmen with modern machinery and electric motors. The purpose is rather to develop more modern techniques which, compared with the achievements of our technological civilization, may seem very primitive but which constitute an essential step forward for these villages, with their traditional economic forms.

5. There are in the rural areas above all three sectors for the development of which the idle manpower potential can be exploited, as primitive techniques are gradually improved.

(a) The increase of agricultural production (e.g. by terracing fields, planting shrubs and trees, utilizing available natural manure, etc.).

(b) The promotion of village crafts and village industries. Today many goods for the consumption of the rural population are still being produced in the villages themselves. The production techniques which have in many cases remained unchanged for centuries can also gradually be improved with simple means. The level of supply and consumption in the villages could thus be raised considerably. There are many ways of raising productivity and the standard of living of those engaged in village industries without any great expense: improving slaughtering and tanning techniques to produce leather of better quality; replacing certain wooden parts of hand looms by metal ones to increase working speed; constructing more effective handpresses to extract oil from seeds and fruits; discovering new methods of mixing for village soap and paper production. Village industries can also make most of the equipment needed for village development work, e.g. simple ox-driven mowing machines, winnowing equipment, Göpel threshing machines of simple design, Göpel pumps, looms, oilpresses and mills, boiling pans for soap and sugar, equipment for drying, mixing and pulverizing natural dung. Even energy can be supplied by relatively primitive means. (In a village near New Delhi, the first generator designed specifically to convert "bullpower" into electricity began operating in the summer of 1958).

(c) The implementation of community projects for a single village or for several villages. If all those who are without work were to join together in labour units of some form or other it would be possible, under the prevailing conditions and with very primitive tools, to build schools or kindergartens or community centres with rooms for adult education or a health service. Feeder roads to the government-financed main roads could also be built; the village streets could be cleaned, provided with drainage, and paved with stones; wells could be sunk, irrigation plants and water tanks could be constructed, etc. In joint community work waste land could be afforested and arable land be protected against floods. All this could be done without any financial assistance from outside simply by calling on the manpower and production resources of the village or villages. That it can be done has been shown by the work of the Community Development Organization.

6. Experiences gained by the Community Development Organization has shown that the following measures must be undertaken in implementing a programme for the development of rural areas based on the mobilization of idle manpower and the improvement of primitive techniques and appliances;

(a) A plan for the development of the village economy must be carefully elaborated. This plan should be harmonized with and integrated into overall development planning.

(b) A development organization serving practically every village must be created. An active member of this organization should be sent to every village with the task of illustrating the potentialities of self-help to the villagers, helping them to organize a system of self-help, and where necessary procuring technical assistance from the government for this village in the form of specialists for agriculture, irrigation or handicraft.

(c) Village assistants and specialists who are to counsel the village population must be trained for their task. Consequently training centres must be established. In addition, the establishment of research centres is necessary since methods and ways must be found to gradually improve the primitive techniques and appliances.

(d) The financing of any such programme by the government must be ensured.

(e) The formation of village organizations and village groups, the foundation of cooperatives, the setting up of youth clubs and women clubs, in short, the organization of the villagers, who until now have only known the social link of the family, into various interest groups must be fostered. The fellah will then not only be a member of his family, but at the same time, for example, a member of the Parents' Council, a member of an agricultural cooperative, a member of the Executive Council of the village in charge of various kinds of work etc.,

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A series of additional measures are also necessary.

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2. For further details see: Billerbeck, Klaus, Mobilization of Manpower Potential in Asia and Africa, Hamburgisches Weltwirtschafts-Archiv, Hamburg (1961) pages 74 - 125.

7. It is a decisive question whether and to what extent such a development programme can be implemented without having to fall back on compulsory measures. We know that the Community Development Programmes, envisage no compulsory measures whatsoever and leave everything to the voluntary decisions of the village population. A study of community development policies in developing countries, based on the extensive literature cited in the bibliography, the author's own visits to developing areas and especially an analysis of the reports of the Indian Programme Evaluation Organization, reveals how protracted and wearisome a development policy proves to be when it is based on complete freedom and how easily the hard-won successes can be nullified by set-backs. With all due respect to community development work in the past, the overall picture is still extremely disappointing.

8. To give an example: Within the framework of the Community Development Organizations the villagers themselves decide which projects they want to implement. It should be taken into consideration that even in the advanced, industrialized democracies of Western Europe and North America the inhabitants of a particular locality are not specifically asked whether they would first like to have a new hospital or a new road. Such decisions are taken by the competent authorities and the community's representatives on the local council; the individual citizen can only exercise his influence indirectly at election time. If however, local building plans cannot take individual citizens' subjective needs into account even in advanced democratic countries, where the general standard of education is incomparably higher than that of village communities in developing countries and where the relationship between the population and its well organized authorities is entirely different, the amount of consideration given to the wishes of individual villages by existing community development policies must surely be viewed as an irresponsible exaggeration of democratic tenets which can only lead in the end, to a misguided and absurd abuse of the principle of freedom.

9. The most crucial point however, is that with the Indian conception of development, the vital task of employing mass labour cannot be mastered and without including all idle manpower of certain age groups and employing it on large-scale projects in an efficiently organized fashion the full mobilization of labour as a productive factor is impossible. Unless properly organized labour squads can be formed and applied, any policy of rural development will remain but a makeshift incapable of gathering momentum. This is the chief reason why community development programmes have hitherto not succeeded in raising the standard of living and production in the villages to any appreciable extent. The general reluctance to apply some form of compulsion, which would be unavoidable in conscripting a labour force, for example, in the last resort accounts for the fact that the ideas of comprehensive village development and full mobilization of idle labour resources have not been able to penetrate any community development programme. It has also prevented the formation of village development "cadres" with an effective practical impact, which could be done with ex-members of an army or national labour force, since during their period of compulsory service they would not only have acquired a sense of discipline and a new feeling of community, but would also know from experience how organized group activity can be used to tackle development projects even with primitive means.

10. The very fact that so far neither the democratic nor the authoritarian non-Communist developing countries have tried out coercion as a means of mobilizing idle manpower potential in itself suggests that the democratic system need not be an obstacle to the adoption of such methods. This supposition is strongly supported by the realization that in applying the necessary minimum of coercion the developing countries could well be guided by the example of industrialized democracies. Hitherto the democratic principles adopted by developing countries have generally been applied much more extensively and rigorously to the rights of citizens than to their duties. In these countries today, notably in India, the ones where democracy functions best, the obligations of the citizens can be regarded as "under-developed" by comparison with those of a citizen in industrial countries. In the economically advanced democracies of North America and Western Europe it goes without saying that every citizen works not only for the benefit of himself and his own family but also for the benefit of the community. This not inconsiderable contribution to community welfare which in some form returns to the individual citizen (civil order and legal protection, education, hospital service, public utilities etc.,) is made largely in the form of taxes. The form of the contribution does not affect the fact that every citizen is compelled by taxation laws to present a part of the product of his work to the community.

11. By contrast, the developing countries generally do not possess anything like such a comprehensive taxation system nor the administrative facilities needed to cover all tax payers in practice. In addition to the fact that the inadequacies of the administrative machine present much greater opportunities for tax evasion, it is plain that large sections of the population are hardly liable for tax, if at all, because their incomes are so small. This is particularly true of rural populations, although it also applies to the urban proletariat. A large part of the village population has no means, other than its own labour of increasing the contribution made to the community as a whole and thereby creating the conditions necessary for a general rise in the standard of living and production. The tax payer in industrial countries is not left to decide of his own free will how much he contributes to the welfare of the community; by analogy there is no reason why the village inhabitant of a developing country should be left to decide whether and to what extent he will offer his labour for the execution of community projects. The direct fulfillment of obligations to the community by means of work ought therefore to be solidly based on legislation and effectively enforced by statutory powers in just the same way as the indirect contribution of the citizen of an industrial country in the form of taxes. By the introduction of a tax payable in the form of work it would be possible to achieve a great many of the aims of village development policy. (The urban proletariat would of course, have to be included in the liability to pay such a tax).[3]

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3. For further details see: Billerbeck, Klaus, Mobilization of Manpower Potential in Asia and Africa, Hamburgisches Weltwirtschafts-Archiv, Hamburg (1961) page 151 ff.

12. Since the imposition of labour tax is capable of mobilising on an appreciable scale only seasonally unemployed labour, an attempt must be made to solve, at least partially, the problem of permanently unemployed manpower as well. This can also be done on lines analogous to those followed in the democratic countries of Europe and America. In most advanced nations a period of compulsory military service is the rule, all healthy young men of certain age groups being called up for one or two years of national service. Conscription of this kind only encounters isolated resistance in such countries and is generally accepted by public opinion as a necessary means of guaranteeing national security. In developing countries, on the other hand, there is either no military service at all or it only exists in the statute books because there are no practical facilities for dealing with all those who are theoretically liable for service.

Here again the communal obligations of a young citizen in a developing country are much more limited than those of his counterpart in an industrial country. The mobilization of idle manpower for compulsory labour need only mean that young men are called up for service to the community comparable to military service elsewhere. Nobody liable for conscription can evade the call-up in industrial countries, and there is no reason why legislation should not be introduced in developing countries to make service with a labour force compulsory and enforceable. If military service in democracies can be justified by the argument that it is essential for the security, defence and even the existence of the state there can, in our view, be no doubt that the national survival of the developing countries depends at least as much on organizing idle labour and employing it productively. Finally, it should not be forgotten that some form of compulsory labour service has been introduced several times by democratic governments during crises, as in the case of the Civilian Conservation Corps in the U.S.A during the world economic depression. The institution of a labour force of young men of a certain age group (and perhaps young women) would enable large-scale projects belonging to the sphere outside the village to be carried out; thus providing the necessary complements to the smaller projects completed within the village sphere by means of the labour tax. In addition, it would permit the employment of young members of the urban population for rural development. It is true that the labour service would only affect part of the permanently unemployed manpower potential directly. In the village, however, the call-up of robust young people would have an indirect effect on the total labour potential, since more of the regularly unemployed would be brought into productive activity to replace those who were withdrawn. [4]

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4. For further details see: Billerbeck, Klaus, Mobilization of Manpower Potential in Asia and Africa, Hamburgisches Weltwirtschafts-Archiv, Hamburg (1961) Page 155 ff.

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